

**Written Testimony of Laura Anderson of Wethersfield, CT,
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Public Health,
March 7, 2012**

Testimony in Support of: **SB 274, AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH
CONCERN TO CHILDREN**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and honorable members of the committee on Public Health:

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I am a mother of two children, who, like the majority of parents, believes that we should put children first. I am writing to you today in support of SB 274, An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children which, in my opinion, represents comprehensive reform of our chemical policy in the State of Connecticut as it relates to children. At long last we may finally have the resolve to protect of our most precious resource: children, from toxic chemicals.

Since the enactment of our federal toxic chemical policies in the 1970's, more than eighty thousand chemicals have been produced and released into our marketplace with little or no data required to show the safety of their long term use. At the same time, over the last 30 years, there has been an evolving body of research that has informed our understanding of the potential health hazards of some chemicals, especially to children.

Research shows us that serious and debilitating health threats including, childhood cancers, asthma, infertility, developmental disabilities and some birth defects are increasing. For example, rates of asthma doubled in prevalence from 1980 and 1995 and continue to stay at this elevated rate.* Since 1975, leukemia, brain cancer and other childhood cancers have increased by more than twenty percent.** Autism has increased more than 10 times in the last 15 years.*** Is it simply a coincidence that these increases follow the explosion of technology, product availability, product enhancement, and the simultaneous increase in the development and use of synthetic chemicals in our products?

Most people are unaware that it is not only the factory smoke down the street which may threaten our health. More so than ever, it is our direct exposure to potentially harmful chemicals in products we bring into our homes and use every day. These chemicals are absorbed into dust from our furniture, fabrics, electronics and cars, and we unknowingly breath them in. Some, we absorb through our skin from personal care products (e.g., shampoos, lotions). Others, leach into our food from plastic and tin food containers.

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Bio-monitoring studies conducted by the CDC and other health organizations indicate most of us carry the burden of several chemicals consistently in our bodies. More alarming is that these studies have found the presence of approximately 200 chemicals in the cord blood of today's average newborn. Similar findings have been reported with pregnant women.

Through my own personal experience as a bio-monitoring participant, I have learned that, as hard as I try to live a healthy life and provide a healthy life for my children, I carry several chemicals in my body. No doubt, my children do too. I, alone, cannot protect them or myself from toxic chemicals.

When did this become acceptable? Are we going to wait until our babies are born with 300, 400, or 500 chemicals in their bodies before we take action? What's the cut off? With bio-monitoring information, the increasing incidence of disease among children, along with the research and cases of toxic exposure and subsequent disease, we can conclude that our current chemical policies are failing to protect our children from rampant and toxic chemical exposure.

When it comes to our children, we must move our policies toward erring on the side of caution by eliminating any harm from toxic chemicals. Protecting children's health is of utmost importance for all of us and should be our first and most important priority. Health care, educational and special care costs associated with childhood diseases and disorders will be a much greater financial burden than any fiscal costs associated with comprehensive reform. I urge you to please pass SB274 *An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.*

*Tom Muir and Mike Zegarac, "Societal Costs of Exposure to Toxic Substances: Economic and Health Costs of Four Case Studies that are Candidates for Environmental Causation," *Environmental Health Perspectives Supplements*, 109, no. S6(December 2001): 885-903.

**Commission of the European Communities, "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restrictions of Chemicals (REACH), Establishing European Chemicals Agency and Amending Directive 1999/45/EC and Regulation (EC) on Persistent Organic Pollutants: Extended Impact Assessment."(October 29,2003): 30.

***D. Andrew Crain, et al., "Female Reproductive Disorders: the Roles of Endocrine Disorders: the Roles of Endocrine-Disrupting Compounds and Developmental Timing," *Fertility and Sterility*, 90, no. 4 (2008):911-40.